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Education Systems in Eurasia

Rashad Kurbanov, Ramin Gurbanov and Asiya Belyalova

Abstract

This chapter is dedicated to national-level systems of education in Eurasian states and their unification within a framework of international regional organizations, where these states participate. The Eurasian states participate not only in CIS but also in other international regional organizations, but researchers do not always consider this fact. The subjects of this research are (a) the elements of the education system and links between them, (b) state bodies and other state entities which regulate the educational relations, and (c) innovation politics in education in every state: network universities and digital technologies. The last one is more relevant due to differences of the intended role of network universities, and the use of digital technologies varies from one legal system to others. The methods of implementation and use of digital technologies are also significantly different.

Keywords: education, international law, Eurasia, network university, digital technologies

1. Introduction

Education as a sphere of integration of states usually does not enjoy the attention of the researchers. At the same time, it is obvious that the unification of the educational programs and standards is the strategic basis for the junction of states. Education based on common principles contributes to the emergence of a unified terminology, techniques, ways, and styles of thinking in different states. In addition, a specialist gets high-quality education in an educational institution, and in the future it will predetermine his choice if he needs to improve his qualifications and to choose an educational institution for his children. Education of the political, business, and scientific elite abroad (mainly in the educational institutions of the EU and the USA) gave the states, where these educational institutions were located, certain political dividends. We should not lose sight of such a modern phenomenon as “the export of educational services” [1]. Almost all sustainable integration associations affect the field of education.

So, the area of education, along with international justice and the protection of human rights, is a sphere of cooperation in the EU and CE [2]. In the structure of the Council of Europe was created and operates the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Mass Media (AS/Cult) [3].

Similar processes are taking place in the Eurasian space. For example, a few states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) participate in some CE and EU projects [4]. In Europe, as a response to the challenges of the postindustrial economy of knowledge, the Bologna Declaration on the creation of a common European Higher Education Area (the Bologna Declaration) was developed and adopted in Bologna on June 19, 1999. The Bologna Declaration outlined the six priorities till

2010 to reform European higher education. Each of the 33 signatory countries adopted national action plans. All EEU member states except Kyrgyzstan (Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Belarus) as well as such Eurasian states as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine are participants of the Bologna process, which was developed within the framework of European integration.

Moreover, the EEU member states are also involved in the work of other integration associations. This means that the lack of integration in an area of public relations within the EEU automatically entails its inclusion in the “orbit” of other integration associations. A typical example is Kazakhstan, which is not a full member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) [5] but has undertaken several commitments to restructure the education system following the recommendations of this international organization.

2. Legal bases of interaction in the Eurasian space

It should be noted that even during the Soviet era, the Minister of Education of the USSR, G. Yagodin, prepared a number of normative documents on the transition to an education system similar to Bologna. This system was almost integrated at the Faculty of Economics of the Lomonosov Moscow State University¹ and the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia². In 1988, the Provisional Research and Development Team “School” was established, headed by the future Minister of Education of the Russian Federation, E. D. Dneprov. In this center, a new educational policy was developed, based on the ideas of variability and free choice at all levels of the education system.

The cooperation of the Eurasian (post-Soviet)³ states in the field of higher education began with the signing of the Agreement on Mutual Recognition and Equivalence of Education Documents, Academic Degrees and Titles of November 24, 1998, by the Governments of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan [6].

Since April 27, 2003, based on the protocol on the introduction of amendments and additions, Tajikistan has joined to this Agreement [7].

Let us consider the interaction of Eurasian states within the main integration associations, as well as at their national level.

2.1 Commonwealth of independent states

In 2001, the concept of forming a single (common) educational space of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was adopted [8].

At the end of 2006, a model educational code was approved for the CIS member states [9]. For the first time, it proclaimed the creation of a single educational space within the CIS. The common educational space of the Commonwealth of Independent States is defined in this document as a space characterized by (1) common principles of state policy in education; (2) consistency of state educational standards, programs, education levels, normative terms of education at each

¹ One of the oldest largest classical universities in Russia and one of the centers of national science and culture, located in Moscow. Created in 1755

² The Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia is a multi-profile university in Moscow, Russia. Established on February 5, 1960, as the Patrice Lumumba Peoples’ Friendship University, since February 5, 1992, is the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia.

³ In this study, the Eurasian states are the states participated in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) (1922–1991), except Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, currently members of the EU).

level, provisions and requirements for training, and certification of scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel; and (3) equal opportunities and free exercise of the rights of citizens to receive education in the state and municipal educational institution in the territory of the CIS member states (Article 1).

In 2013, at the 39th plenary meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS member states (Decree No. 39-6 of November 29, 2013), a new edition of this model code was adopted [10].

On December 10, 2010, at a meeting of the council of heads of CIS member states, representatives of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Tajikistan and Ukraine decided to create a CIS Network University based on the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. In 2015, the Republic of Azerbaijan joined the Network University. *Raison d'être* (meaning of existence) of the Network University is the possibility for student to study in the several educational structures at the same time, including foreign ones. In practice, this means the possibility of undergraduate study (bachelor's program) at a basic university and graduate (master program) and postgraduate studies—in partner universities.

The governing body of the Network University is the Coordinating Council of the Network University, which is composed of representatives from all partner universities. Researchers admit that the Network University of the CIS is, overall, a counterpart to the EU Erasmus Mundus program [11].

2.2 Eurasian economic union

Today, one of the most relevant issues in the framework of the EAEU integration is the creation of a single educational space of states. The need to integrate the higher education systems of the EAEU member states is the basis for the successful integration cooperation. At the same time, the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, signed on May 29, 2014 (the Treaty on EAEU) [12], does not provide for the formation of a supranational educational space, although it is indicated that the EAEU was created to ensure “conditions for the stable development of the economies of the member states in the interests of raising the living standards of their populations; the formation of a single market for goods, services, capital and labor resources; comprehensive modernization, cooperation and increasing the competitiveness of national economies in the global economy” (Article 4 of the Treaty). Only Article 97.3 of the Treaty on the EAEU regulates relations concerning mutual recognition of documents on education while excluding from the scope of the Treaty documents on education in such professions as medicine, pharmaceuticals, pedagogical sciences, and law.

The main directions for implementing the digital issues of the EEU until 2025, approved by the Decision of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council No. 12 of October 10, 2017, “On the Main Directions for Implementing the Digital Agenda of the Eurasian Economic Union until 2025,” also do not contain any mention of education—the digital transformation of education was not mentioned in the list of directions of the digital economy development (Section III of this Decision).

Back in 2009, Decision No. 463 of the Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC, 2001–2014) was the international economic organization of several former Soviet republics, which created to effectively promote its participants in the process of forming the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space, as well as the realization of other goals and objectives related to the deepening of integration in the economic and humanitarian fields. EURASEC was abolished in connection with the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union “On the Agreement on Cooperation of the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Community in the Field of Education” of December 11, 2009 [13] and approved

an agreement in accordance with Articles 2, 3, and 6 of which EURASEC member states agreed to support direct links between universities and scientific organizations on the basis of cooperation agreements, to promote the development of academic mobility of students and teachers. Also, for the implementation of this international treaty, the states came to an agreement on the establishment of the Council on Education under the EURASEC Integration Committee (the Council is the legal successor to the Council for Mutual Recognition and Equivalence of Education Documents, Academic Degrees and Titles under the EURASEC Integration Committee, which acted on the basis of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on mutual recognition and equivalence of education certificates, academic degrees, and titles of November 24, 1998, and the Decision of the EURASEC Integration of September 19, 2002, No. 146.), which operates in accordance with the Statute on the Council, approved by the EURASEC Integration Committee [14]. It is regrettable to note that the provisions of this international treaty are “dissolved” in the norms of the Treaty on the EAEU, which does not mention the integration of the EAEU member states in the field of education.

Of course, the EAEU Treaty included the Cooperation Agreement of the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Community in education in 2009 to the list of international treaties that continue to operate, however limiting their validity to “the part in which they can be implemented in the absence of the EURASEC bodies mentioned in them, dissolved in accordance with the Treaty on the EURASEC.” We are agreeing with S.M. Yun, who said “...the soft wording ‘can be fulfilled’ and the absence of norms in the EAEU Treaty creates a situation in which the question of developing multilateral cooperation in the field of education within the EAEU is more a matter of political negotiations than regulation” [15].

The day after the leading universities signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Eurasian Network University of April 12, 2016 [16], the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation in the meeting of the heads of state executive authorities of the EAEU member states in the area of higher education and science, offered to sign the Memorandum on Cooperation in educational and scientific-technological interaction in the Eurasian region between the ministries of education and science of the Union of April 13, 2016 [17]. This document was signed by all EAEU member states except Kazakhstan. It was aimed at coordinating education policies. The implementation of this project was delayed due to structural changes in the Russian public administration in the field of higher education and science.

In 2018, the chairmanship of the EAEU passed to Russia. It became possible to distinguish two completely specific areas of Eurasian integration in higher education: (1) approaching the educational standards based on the needs of the Eurasian common market and (2) creation of Eurasian common scientific clusters and campuses based on universities, large enterprises, academies of science for the development of new technologies, and Eurasian common import substitution with centralized financing [18].

2.3 Shanghai cooperation organization

On August 16, 2007, at the Summit of Heads of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states, the leaders of the Kazakhstan, China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan supported the Russian initiative to create on a multilateral basis the Network University of SCO member states, and on October 28, 2008, in Astana (Kazakhstan) at the meeting of the ministers of education of the SCO member states, the concept of the creation and functioning of the SCO University

was signed. The educational network of the SCO University includes 79 leading universities of these countries and Belarus [19].

2.4. BRICS summit

Russia also participates in BRICS Network University. According to paragraph 64 of the updated plan of activities of the Russian chairmanship in BRICS (approved by Presidential Instruction No. Pr-172 of 29.01.2015) [20], the State Policy Department for Higher Education of the Russian Ministry of Education has compiled a list of universities for participation in the BRICS Network University.

The BRICS Network University provides graduate (master) and postgraduate programs, as well as coordination of the international research.

On July 5–7, 2018, BRICS Network University held the conference “Unlocking BRICS Universities’ Partnerships: Postgraduate Education, Opportunities and Challenges” in Stellenbosch (South Africa). It identified six main areas of research: energy; information technologies; information security, ecology, and climate change; economics; water resources; and the threat of pollution. International Thematic Groups (ITGs) were created to exchange their national research and practical experience in these areas of knowledge.

2.5 Russian Federation

The Russian Federation (Russia) joined the Bologna process on September 19, 2003. The use of a system based on credit units in higher professional education began in Russia even before the official entry to the Bologna process. Thus, in 2002, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation adopted the “Methodology for calculating the labor intensity of the main educational programs of higher professional education in credit units” [21] and sent it to higher educational institutions using credit units to account for the labor intensity of the students’ academic load.

In the Russian education system, the credit system received the official name—the system of “credits.”

According to the Constitution of the Russian Federation (point “e,” Part 1, Article 71) [22], education and science are under the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the constituent entities of the Federation.

On May 15, 2018, the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 215 “On the Structure of Federal Executive Bodies” [23] established the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. Under this Ministry there is the Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor). Its activity includes licensing or authorization in higher education; certification of researchers and teachers, as well as graduates; confirmation and nostrification of education documents; etc.

On December 19, 2012, by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 1666, the “Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025” was approved [24].

This Strategy proclaims the development of the Russian education system as one of the priorities of the state national policy in the following areas:

- Training, retraining, and advanced training of teaching staff.
- Assistance in the educational (training) migration of Russian citizens, including the purpose of obtaining education and advanced training in professions that are of great demand

On May 9, 2017, the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation “On the Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Russia for 2017–2030” [25] was signed. According to this Decree, it is supposed to provide conditions for scientific and technical creativity, including the creation of platforms for self-realization of educational and scientific workers; to use and develop various educational technologies, including distance learning, e-learning, in the implementation of educational programs; to establish sustainable educational links with compatriots living abroad, foreign citizens, and apatrides who speaks Russian language, including through information and communication technologies; and to develop and implement the partnership programs of educational institutions of higher education and Russian high-tech organizations, including improving educational programs.

On the basis of this Decree, by the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of July 28, 2017, No. 1632-p, the program “Digital Economy of the Russian Federation” was approved [26].

This program states that the quantity of personnel and the compliance of educational programs with the needs of the digital economy are insufficient. It is recognized that there is a serious shortage of personnel in the educational process at all levels. The procedures of the final certification do not use enough digital tools of educational activities; the process is not included integrally in the digital information environment.

At the same time, it was pointed that there is an infrastructure of science and innovations in Russia; it is represented by various development institutions, technology parks, and business incubators, which can and should be used to develop the digital economy. According to this program, five basic directions of development of the digital economy in the Russian Federation are defined for the period up to 2024, including not only education itself but also the formation of research competencies and technical groundwork.

The main objectives of the direction concerning personnel and education are:

- Creating the conditions for training the staff for digital economy
- Improving the education system, which should provide the digital economy with competent staff
- The labor market based on the requirements of the digital economy
- Creating a motivation system for the development of the necessary competencies and the participation of staff in the development of the Russian digital economy

As the main objective of the direction concerning the formation of research competencies and technological groundwork, this program calls the creation of a support system for search and applied research in the digital economy (research infrastructure of digital platforms), ensuring technological independence in each area of pass-through digital technologies that are globally competitive, and national security.

2.6 The Republic of Kazakhstan

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan, RK) of February 18, 2011, No. 407-IV “On Science” [27] and the State Program for the Development of Education for the years 2011–2020 [28] have created a new group like the Russian higher educational institutions—“Research University” and “National Research

University” [29]. This legal status implies teaching, learning, and research at all levels of education.

The State Program for the Development of Education and Science for 2016–2019 was approved by the Decree of the Kazakh President No. 205 of March 1, 2016 [30], as well as by the Decree of the Kazakh Government of July 24, 2018, No. 460 [31]. At the higher education level, the main objectives of this program are developing skills that are more relevant to the labor market, more fully integration of Kazakhstan into the European Higher Education Area, improving the interaction between education, science, and industry, promoting the commercialization of research, strengthening national self-awareness, and encouraging active civil and social responsibility.

The feature of the legal status of non-state universities of Kazakhstan is that they can exist in the form of joint-stock companies (JSC) (in 2015, the network of higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan included 64 private universities (including 10 joint-stock companies) and 61 state universities). Their main shareholder is, as a rule, the ministry or the government itself. JSC are commercial organizations, but nonprofit units may be established within them).

Noting Bologna system, the Kazakhstan system of academic degrees chose a gradual transformation, suggesting the existence of a transition period. In the transition period of 2005–2011, in parallel, the degree of the candidate and the Doctor of Science and the new degree of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) coexisted. At the same time, the new degree of the PhD, being formally equated with the candidate, was perceived in practice as more valuable [32].

Another education area, where the education management system is still of an intermediate nature, is the education quality control. In Kazakhstan, there are accreditation and attestation at the same time, which are opposed to each other. The old form of quality control—attestation—is a rigid form of quality control. Accreditation is voluntary. Attestation is carried out every 5 years for quality control based on state standards and is the basis for higher educational institutions to obtain permission to carry out their activities.

Two national accreditation agencies, the Independent Kazakhstan Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (IAQA) [33] and the Independent Accreditation and Rating Agency (IARA) [34], were established in 2008 and 2011, respectively. Their responsibility is to accredit the higher educational institutions as well as the education programs. These agencies became full members of the European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education—IARA on November 30, 2016, and IAQA on February 13, 2017 [35].

The Decree of the Kazakh Government No. 827 of 12.12.2017 approved the State Program “Digital Kazakhstan” [36]. Thus, this Decree includes, inter alia, increasing digital literacy in vocational and higher education. It is recognized that the “digital leap” in the country is impossible without a change of approaches to education and without retraining of staff. Earlier, in the 1990s of the twentieth century, the state program on accelerated industrial-innovative development started, the Bolashak (future) international education program, was initiated [37]. In the system of higher, postgraduate education on the basis of three specialties, the subject of “Information and Communication Technologies” (ICT) was introduced, which provides students with basic knowledge of the use of ICT in practice within the chosen profession.

2.7 The Republic of Armenia

On May 19, 2005, the Republic of Armenia (Armenia) signed the Bologna Declaration [38]. The agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science of

the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia on cooperation in education [39] was signed earlier on July 13, 2004, but did not enter into force. The Bologna system was withdrawn only medical education.

It should be noted that introduction of the Bologna education system in Armenia is rather positive [40]. The credit rating system in universities under Bologna system competes in Armenia with the traditional system of students' knowledge assessment adopted in Russia, which is adopted in universities focused on the Russian education model. The largest higher educational institution of this kind in Armenia is the Russian-Armenian University (RAU). The university was founded in Yerevan in 1997, in accordance with the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Armenia [41].

In accordance with the mentioned interdepartmental Agreement on cooperation in education of July 13, 2004, the State Institute for Advanced Studies and Retraining in Informatics of the Republic of Armenia granted the status of the basic organization of the CIS in sphere of education of persons with disabilities and unemployed citizens of the EAEU states.

State universities in Armenia are autonomous nonprofit legal state entities that operate in accordance with government policies. Universities independently determine their budget and use of funds received from non-state sources. Funds received from the state budget are only part of the general budget of the university and can be used for a specific purpose in accordance with the standards established by law. Universities are also free to form their internal organizational structure [42].

Student learning outcomes are evaluated based on exams and tests, which are conducted in written or oral form. Exam results are graded according to classification systems that vary significantly among institutions (5-, 10-, or 20-point marking scales, 4-point graduation of letters A–F, etc.) [43].

The main educational program is undergraduate (bachelor's) degree; in higher educational institutions, it takes 4 years, and for medical specialties, it is 5 years. The duration of training in the program of specialty is 5 years [44]. Master's qualifications are awarded to persons with a bachelor's degree or specialist, according to the results of at least 1 year of vocational education program. The degree provides access to postgraduate studies based on the results of entrance examinations of applicants. At the end of graduate school and successful thesis, a graduate student receives a PhD degree.

2.8 The Republic of Belarus

The main law regulating the sphere of education is the Code of the Republic of Belarus (Belarus) No. 243-3 "On Education," adopted on January 13, 2011 [45]. In accordance with this document, the state policy in education should be based on the principles of the priority of human rights, ensuring equal access to education, compulsory general basic education, integration into the world educational space, secular nature, and environmental orientation of education. The Belarus Code "On Education" also provides for the development of education, considering the tasks of the socioeconomic development of the state and the state-public nature of education management. Even though formally these principles can be called progressive, the degree of their real implementation in the education system of Belarus causes doubts among researchers [46].

The Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of March 28, 2016, No. 250 approved the State Program "Education and Youth Policy" for 2016–2020 [47].

According to this document, institutions of higher education in Belarus include 43 public and 9 private universities [48]. They are divided to universities (33),

academies (8), institutes (10), and higher college (1). The main difference between institutes and universities is that they train narrow specialists, and in higher college, you can get a higher education only at the first level. The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus is the only state body for implementing state policy in education, organization of scientific research, and education international cooperation. In particular, the Ministry has jurisdiction over the quality control of education, coordination of the activities of state educational institutions, and licensing of educational institutions. It also organizes the development of educational programs and standards with the participation of educational institutions, provides scientific and methodological support for education, etc. [49].

Local executive and administrative bodies of education have to develop and submit for approval to local councils of deputies the programs for development of all levels of education in the relevant territorial unit. They are responsible for the organization of advanced training and retraining of specialists of educational institutions subordinate to them, as well as providing graduates with the job. In addition, local authorities are charged with the responsibility for the material, technical, and economic support of educational institutions [50].

The universities can submit their requirements and recommendations to state authorities through the Republican Council of Rectors [51]. Another feature of the Belarus education system is that, according to the Belarus Code on Education, employment of graduates of higher educational institutions occurs through distribution based on the received specialty and qualification (distribution does not apply to graduates of evening and extramural education and full-time graduates who have received education on a fee basis. The terms of compulsory work in the direction of work for graduates who have received education at the expense of the republican budget range from 1 to 5 years, depending on the qualifications obtained).

Back in 1993, the Republic of Belarus ratified the European Cultural Convention; in 2002 Belarus participated the Lisbon Convention of 1997 “On the recognition of qualifications relating to higher education in the European Region” [52]. Preparation for entry into the European Higher Education Area was resumed in 2010, and in 2011 the Ministry of Education of Belarus formally sent an application to the Bologna Secretariat [53].

However, the Public Bologna Committee presented its own independent assessment of the situation of higher education in Belarus. The higher education system of Belarus must be deeply reformed [54]. As a result, Belarus has become the only state that was not accepted into the European Higher Education Area immediately upon application. In 2012–2015 the new structure of higher education was formally approved (bachelor, master, and third degree—doctoral—remains beyond the scope of reform [55]); the issue of the European Diploma Supplement on Higher Education became mandatory.

Only on May 15, 2015, at the conference of ministers of education of the European Higher Education Area member states in Yerevan (Armenia), Belarus received the status of a participant in the Bologna process [56].

2.9 The Republic of Tajikistan

In the Republic of Tajikistan (Tajikistan), there are 63 organizations providing science and scientific services. For the period 2011–2015, the number of specialists-researchers has increased almost in 1.5 times. Mechanisms for the formation of a system for scientific staff training have been created and introduced; a national system for the protection of scientific work and obtaining a scientific degree is being developed, including as part of the gradual transformation of postgraduate studies into a doctoral program (PhD) [57].

The main normative act regulating relations, including higher education relations, is the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan of May 17, 2004, No. 34 “On Education” [58].

By the Decree of the Tajikistan Government of June 30, 2012, No. 334, the National Strategy for the Development of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020 was approved [59]. In particular, it states the completion of the transition of the higher education system to the Bologna model. At the same time, in this program there is no mention of “digitalization” of higher education in Tajikistan.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan [60] is the highest executive body of state authority in sphere of education and science; it implements a unified state policy and regulates legal standards in education and science and in areas of training, education, scientific and technical activities, custody and guardianship, as well as support and social protection of students and pupils of educational and scientific institutions. It is also entrusted with coordinating and controlling the activities of educational and scientific institutions directly and through state local education authorities in collaboration with ministries and departments, local executive bodies of state power, the public, and other organizations.

Today, in the Tajikistan universities, a gradual transition to a credit system of education is being carried out, and the scope of application of new information technology tools in the educational process is expanding. This system has already been implemented in almost all universities. The transition to a credit system of education has allowed to broaden the prospects for academic mobility of teachers and researchers of Tajikistan with higher educational institutions of the CIS countries and other countries.

Higher professional institutions in Tajikistan may operate in the form of educational, scientific, or educational and scientific production complexes. In 2010, Tajikistan joined the Bologna process [61]. In 2013, it adopted the regulation on the protection of dissertations for the doctoral degree (PhD), and since January 2015, the dissertation councils have begun their work [62]. Currently, there is a Decree of the Tajikistan Government of November 26, 2016, No. 505 “On approval of the Model Regulations on the dissertation council, the Order of conferring scientific degrees and the award of academic titles (associate professor, professor) and the Order of state registration of protected scientific theses” [63].

However, the prospect of real participation of Tajikistan in the Bologna system is also conditional. The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan of July 22, 2013, No. 1004 “On Education” [64], Article 23 “Documents on education,” says “Educational institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan issue the following types of documents to citizens: ... diploma of higher vocational education (bachelor, specialist, master) ...”; however, the status of these titles and the procedure for obtaining them are not regulated by the law, which hinders the possibility of their correlation with international standards.

In July 2014, Tajikistan introduced a single centralized entrance exam with several procedures to ensure fair conduct and assessment at the exam and minimize any interference.

The most successful accession of Tajikistan to the Bologna system is in the direction of a gradual transition of higher educational institutions to the so-called credit education technology using the European ECTS mechanism, when the assessment of student knowledge and competencies is carried out using credit units [65].

2.10 The Republic of Kyrgyzstan

Higher education system in the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) was characterized as having an extensive system of interaction with foreign universities and programs [66].

On the one hand, such diversity in the educational opportunities provides benefits to the state focused on education and the creative potential of its citizens due to the limited natural resources; on the other hand, it seems that there are no uniform national standards in this area.

The higher education system in the country is represented by four types of universities: universities, academies, colleges, and institutes. There are 50 higher educational institutions in the country, 34 of which are public [67]. Since the country's independence, the role of private higher educational institutions has consistently increased.

In Kyrgyzstan, a multilevel system of higher and postgraduate education has been developed; it includes a specialty, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, as well as postgraduate and doctoral studies. Kyrgyzstan chose a strategy of mass higher education as opposed to Tajikistan, which adopted the concept of the elite higher education. The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic of April 30, 2003, No. 92 "On Education" [68] focuses on the social component, the protection of educational and other rights of vulnerable categories of citizens, and the social protection of students.

The highest governmental body of Kyrgyzstan authorized to conduct state policy in the area of higher education is the Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan [69]. From 1994 to 2014, licensing and accreditation of universities in Kyrgyzstan was carried out by the State Inspectorate for Licensing and Accreditation of Kyrgyzstan without involving the staff of professional associations [70]. By the Decree of the Kyrgyz Government of June 3, 2014, No. 298 "On the reorganization of the State Inspectorate for Licensing and Accreditation of Educational Institutions under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic" [71], this State Inspectorate was attached to the Ministry of Education and Science.

Since 2012, Kyrgyzstan has moved to a two-tier "Bologna" system of higher education [72].

The National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2040 "Taza Koom-Jany Door" was approved by the Decree of the Kyrgyz President of November 01, 2018 [73]. It is the main program document determining the strategic directions of the country's development. In terms of education modernization, this document assumes widespread use of digital technologies in education, which should be built in the direction of solving real-life problems and challenges.

In accordance with this, document priorities of scientific activities are determined depending on the country's strategic priorities and the need for innovation.

Research, in turn, should focus on obtaining scientific and practical results. It should be estimates from the point of view of fund use effectiveness and the application of its results.

At the same time, the goal is to further reform the system of awarding scientists and academic degrees, in order to improve the scientific potential of the country and to finalize the system of awarding scientists and academic degrees that meet international standards.

The priority in higher education in the opinion of the developers of the program should be the development of Kyrgyz national education system that is competitive in the international market of services.

Paragraph 3.6 of the Taza Kome-Jany Door strategy is dedicated to the digitization of public administration, including higher education. Its main task, in the opinion of the developers of this Strategy, is to use it as a tool for eradicating corruption in public sector by minimizing the influence of the human factor through the automation of administrative processes and procedures and the provision of digital public services.

3. Conclusion

The integration of higher and postgraduate education systems in the Eurasian space is quite successful. In particular, this concerns a change in the system of assessing students' knowledge, which has become much more variable than the Soviet system. Despite some "minuses" of integration of the educational space within the framework of the "Bologna process," it should be noted that it provided a certain unification of the construction of the educational process. Different "speeds" of this process in the EAEU member states are explained by the need to overcome the existing imbalances in education. The gradual unification of the state regulation of higher and postgraduate education not only provides a freer choice of place of study throughout the EAEU but will also allow to solve emerging problems in a more expeditious manner.

The implementation of Network Universities allows the students to independently form a program of study based on the individual choice of competencies mastered by them. This fact should be positively evaluated.

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